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Integrating the Personal and the Professional

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Introduction

The British Journal of Psychotherapy Integration is the official journal of the United Kingdom Association for Psychotherapy Integration. It is published twice a year.

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Contacting Us

Please address all correspondence to:

Ukapi
Flat 1
13a Alexandria Road
London W13 0NP

Alternatively you can email us at:
journal@ukapi.com

For general information regarding UKAPI please visit our web site:
www.ukapi.com

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Editorial

Integrating the Personal and the Professional

The journal offers a place where integrative psychotherapists of very different persuasions can articulate their own individual understanding of the integrative endeavour and its application to practice. We continue to support the idea that there is no one integrative paradigm or school of integrative practice. As we often note in the editorial we sometimes establish a themed journal and seek articles accordingly. Sometimes, we collect a melange of articles which may or may not coalesce around a theme. All our contributions are from practitioners who have an allegiance to an explicit integrative sensibility though they understand this differently.

For this edition of the journal we had the unusual pleasure of both a range and a diversity of suitable contributions. On the one hand, this edition is a melange. On the other hand, there is a shared echo of thoughtful exploration, richly referenced on specific personal and professional aspects of practice. There is a sense of standing back from the immediacy of therapeutic engagement and reflecting on our philosophical and theoretical underpinnings whilst still grounding this in practice.

Avril Hollings has written a very sensitive, thoughtful and clear account of the challenges that are particular to working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans couples. Drawing on years of experience in this field, she highlights what could be seen as common in any couples system and what may be unique to these groups. We appreciated Avril's drawing close attention to what is similar and what is different with clear links to her practice.

Lesley McGown presents the findings from her Doctoral Research into 'Spontaneous Mental Imagery' as it arises within the therapist in the therapeutic setting. Lesley explores this phenomenon as 'a form of uncanny intersubjectivity' and 'developed insight' about the world of the client. She also talks about how the therapist might use this and raises questions of explicit self disclosure. She invites each of us to be alive to this process and to welcome it as part of the implicit communication between therapist and client.

Philippa Perry offers a very personal and idiosyncratic account of her experiences both as a client and then as a therapist revisiting issues of therapist self-disclosure from a seemingly humorous, yet thoughtful perspective. Philippa illustrates the inevitable link between the personal and the professional in our work.

Michael Tophoff explores the interface between some eastern and western traditions, particularly in relation to a separate sense of self, the privileging of autonomy, independence and separateness rather than the inextricably interdependent nature of all people, creatures, and the cosmos. This is essentially a philosophical conversation which might raise questions about our underlying assumptive systems in psychotherapy.

David Zigmond, with the agreement from the writer of the first letter, presents us with a heartfelt communication, decades after the event that attests to the power of the human to human relationship in the work we do, which endures over time. As someone who chooses to